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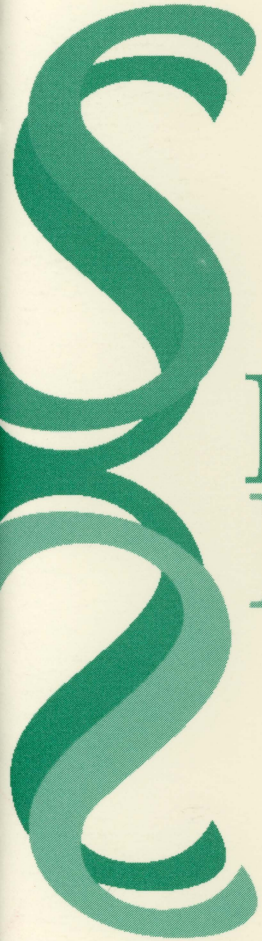

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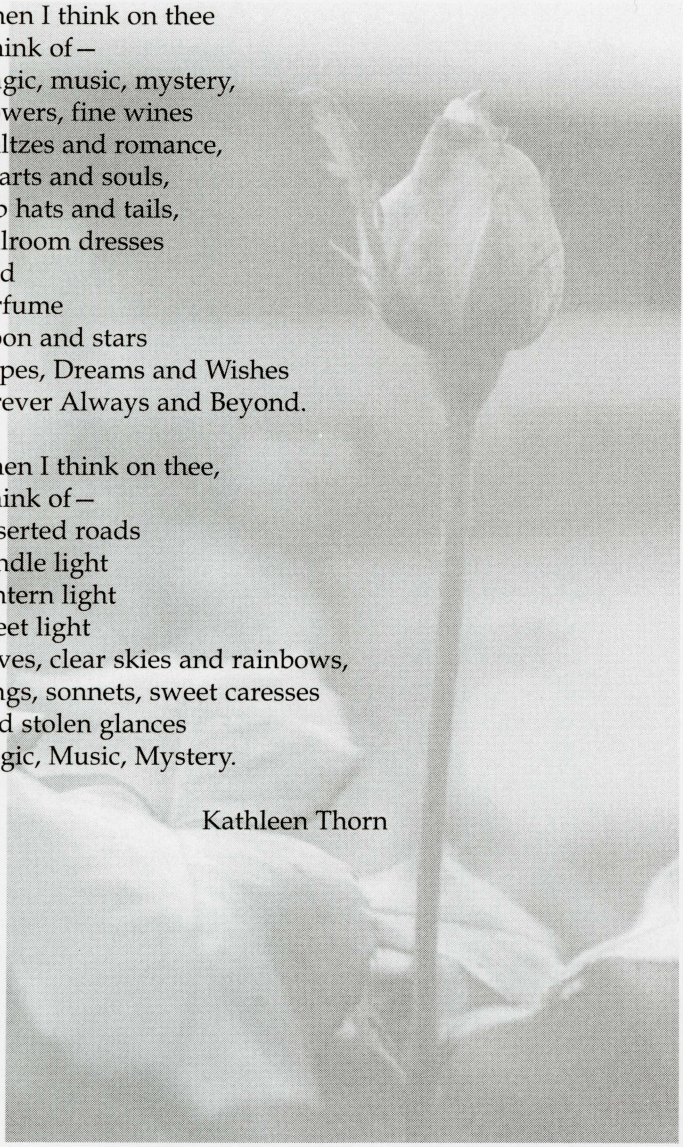
When I think on thee

When I think on thee
I think of—
Magic, music, mystery,
Flowers, fine wines
Waltzes and romance,
Hearts and souls,
Top hats and tails,
Ballroom dresses
And
Perfume
Moon and stars
Hopes, Dreams and Wishes
Forever Always and Beyond.

When I think on thee,
I think of—
Deserted roads
Candle light
Lantern light
Street light
Doves, clear skies and rainbows,
Songs, sonnets, sweet caresses
And stolen glances
Magic, Music, Mystery.

Kathleen Thorn



Pat Pitthayasri

MLK

I wanted to write your song
the one that could be sung by anyone
and everyone who heard would know
it was really me, loving you.
I've given my hands to so many,
more often and easy my heart,
two of the former, one heavy,
and two of the latter, luck.
Shame is a great teacher
like fear is a great warning,
and foolishness prompted me to waste
my talent many years—
cloudy eyes still may write beauty
about what they see none too clearly
or what they can't see past.
You told me your eyes were boring
but why do I gaze so long?
My pen flowed stupid free before,
but I can't quite fit your eyes to song.
There's too much of you to be captured
with words that I used for the lesser—
your face sings to me when you're sleeping,
your heart isn't separate from mine.
Dear girl, full of light and power—
flow with me, forget that we are two.
I see through you only in pictures
that I try to paint perfect like;
you are too good for even my sweet word,
too shining for even my life,
too lovely for even my blue eyes,
too perfect to take me for wife.
What completes us binds us together—
you are nothing of me yet the same—
I thought I would pen that somewhat,
I thought I might put us to words;
but you are too fleeting, as I am,
to define you is like to speak joy.

And I really can't write your song, love,
I may as well capture the moon—
beauty is not to be caged
by simple lines like I can make;
no one needs me to point you out.
darling, they see you stand out on your own.
And everyone knows that my bursting heart,
proud hands and words, I give you:
should someday you think they can be life to you,
say the word and let my life be with you.

And I want to write your song—
the one that can be sung by anyone
and everyone who hears will know
it's really me, loving you.

Olivia Bitting

Kelly Grammes

Dinner and a Movie

"*Oui, Monsieur.* The *soup du jour* and one large order of *cassoulet pour vous.* And what will *Mademoiselle* be having this evening?"

"I'd like a large order of *cassoulet* as well, but hold the pork, and –"

"She'll have a medium garden salad, Maurice."

"*Oui, Monsieur.*" The waiter scurried off to the next table.

"Phillip!" She glared at her dinner partner.

"Yes, dear?" He replied, oblivious.

"You just ordered for me."

"I'm sorry, dear. I thought you were on a diet."

"That's beside the point. I don't need you to order for me."

"Sorry."

"You should be," she replied. "I know how to feed myself."

"Danielle, I said I was sorry. Get over it."

"Fine." She picked up her water glass and swished it around. She took a sip. Through the clear liquid, she caught him studying her. "What?"

He saw her glance. "Nothing."

"No, really, what?"

"It's stupid, really. No, I won't say."

"Phillip. Tell me."

"Oh, all right, fine. We come here all the time, and you always order the same thing."

"I happen to like *cassoulet.*"

"Well, I do too, but I work out."

She examined him incredulously. "Really? Where?"

"The gym."

"That's not what I meant."

An eyebrow lifted. He sipped from his water glass. "I hope the food gets here soon. I'm starved."

"How can you tell?" she remarked dryly. He ignored her. She picked at her napkin. "I don't like it."

"What?"

"When you order for me."

"I was trying to be helpful."

"I don't need that kind of help, Phillip."

"Sorry."

"No, you're not."

"Get over it, Danielle."

"Why?"

"Why what?"

"Why should I get over it?"

"Why not?"

"Because it bothers me. You think I'm fat."

He unfolded the beverage menu. "No, I don't."

"Yes, you do. Why else would you order for me? There's a pattern. Last Christmas you bought me a dress two sizes too large. I couldn't wear it."

"I didn't know that. I thought it looked fine on you New Year's Eve."

"I returned it to the store and got the right size after Christmas."

"Oh." He sipped his water again. "Where is that blasted waiter, anyway?"

"*Cafe du Lorraine* is a busy restaurant, Phillip. You knew that when you made the reservations."

"Yes, I know. Can we talk about something else, please?"

"Fine by me." She thought a moment. "What movie do you want to see after dinner?"

"We're going to the eight o' clock show of 'Dr. Doolittle' at the discount theatre."

"I thought we agreed on 'Antz' at the Multiplex."

"Too expensive."

"It's only nine dollars."

"That's expensive, Danielle."

"Phillip, you're being ridiculous. I don't want to see 'Dr. Doolittle.' I want to see 'Antz.'"

"It's a cartoon."

"Computer animation. It's a very sophisticated medium."

"Oh look, here comes Maurice.."

They smiled at the waiter.

"And how are *Monsieur* and *Mademoiselle* doing?"

"Fine," Phillip said. She just stared at the table.

The waiter placed the cassoulet and the salad on the table and lifted the lid. Steam rose from Phillip's warm meal. Danielle's salad just sat there.

Maurice refilled their water glasses and pulled out his notepad. "The *soup du jour* will be a few minutes more, *Monsieur*. It is very popular today, so the chef has to make another pot. In the meantime, what would *Monsieur* and *Mademoiselle* like to drink?"

"Some white wine would be lovely," Danielle responded before Phillip could speak. "The third one on the list."

"Very good." He took their beverage menus. "I shall return in two minutes with your wine." Danielle nodded. Maurice left.

"What was that about, Danielle?"

"What?"

"Are you trying to get even with me?"

"Why should you say that?" She smiled pleasantly. "I just thought you might like some white wine."

"Danielle, I don't like that wine any more than you do."

"Oh, Phillip." She rolled her eyes. "It's fine."

He slumped back in his chair. "All right, I get it."

"Really?"

"Yes. You're mad because I picked the meal and the movie. So you deliberately chose a wine I despise."

She smiled. "Eat your food, dear."

C.M. Younger

Beyond Miles

In a land of black and white that teeters upon morning,
I tremble in the face of candlelight, awaiting your arrival.
A breeze gently shakes the resting of the table's white cloth,
Somewhere down the cobblestone lane a street lamp goes off.
Silence plays a waltz for us.
Caressed in a gown, snow dove satin,
You float 'neath the heavens and smile your soul to me...
As if I had said, "I love you," just the day before.

I forget the wine and fall into your eyes—
Drowned by a stream of unparalleled life.
I just want to hold you.
Echoing my thoughts, you pull me close,
Laying your cheek against mine,
Whispering ballads of love and distance,
Whispering thank yous and hollow regrets.
I dive into your waters once more,
One last time as you begin to fade,
Remembering a harbor where I was happy.
Your lips fall upon me
And I wake in a colored land of gray.

Daniel Sadler

The Heart

I stole it from your chest,
held it gently,
careful not to puncture it.
I massaged it,
caressed it,
held on to it tight.
Then I dropped it.
It bled,
and I felt so bad.
But you picked it up,
put it back together
and gave it away again.
I controlled the urge to
take it back;
I promised I wouldn't drop it again.
But you said, "Too late."
So I cried,
and threw mine to the ground.
It bled,
but nobody was there to pick it up.

Jaime Long

Kelly Grammes

There is no title for shortcomings

the end seems becoming
stuck between two women who I want to be
but there are shortcomings
the one on the piano strikes saltwater tears with an F-SHARP
as she plays in the operahouse.
I am ignored
and watching the crowd to see if anyone is looking at me
the girl in row R between a lover and a stranger
childhood memory lapses and something unknown forces a
sadness
that I cannot hide in my thrift store jacket
and you don't even notice me.
Where are you, lover?
talking to the swine on the end,
obese with an obsession for
a fat cat, two seats down.

Bridget Velten

Lonely Season

The hounds are still demanding my name, but are only granted the gift of silence, fueling the crescendo of their madness. Their midnight calls churn above the chimney top, slowly joining the hearth's breath as it drifts toward the stars. Bloodshot eyes have long since found me, leaning against the ebony trunk of an oak, its arms swaying in the wind. Though the beasts cannot see my face, they surely can recall the scent that touches their snouts—for I have been here before. Growls of rage are the welcome mat for trespassers; whines of pleasure are the sweet greeting for friends. In five years, I have seen both expressions on the jaws of these dogs, but their current state suggests only one thing...I have been replaced.

Words from your lips could not possibly subdue my current chaos...Somewhere in that house you are with him. Maybe by the fireside, cradled in the warm closeness that winter brings—or dining in the parlor, its table marked by two points of candle light. I wonder if your thoughts are on him...I wonder if your thoughts are ever on me.

It has snowed but once this season, yet the cold that grips my heart pierces like ice. I do not believe that the moon is shining tonight. The shadows and calm frozen to the windows of the home next door vividly contrast with the lantern above your doorway. Your house looks warmly inviting...

...The hounds are still calling. Something tells me I must act tonight. I wonder if you love him today...I wonder if you will love me tomorrow. Know, my darling, that when I pass the threshold and come upon the embrace of two, I may have a gun for him, but my soul's kiss is for you...

Daniel Sadler

I Am Here With You

Do not fear, for everything will be all right.
Clear away those salty rivers,
For those sad puddles mean naught
Since you are not alone.

Sweep that despair from your deep eyes
With the courage that dwells underneath.
Exhale that air of solitude
And realize that you are not alone.

Do not hold captive your happiness;
Release it from that internal prison.
Remove your impenetrable shield
So you can feel you're not alone.

Your future holds sweet promises,
Collapse not under this burden
For its weight is but deceiving
And you should know you're not alone.

Stand tall so love can find you
(Or else, love not due to your fear),
But do not cower in desolate peril
Because you will not stand alone.

Allow the power to swathe your heart
And disintegrate all of your woes.
Open your soul to my love
So you will never be alone.

Michele Cerny

Drowsy

Peace on Earth
She scribbles down
In calligraphy-blocked letters
Onto smeared-pencil tag-board.
Chipped red nail polish
Flakes away onto brown corduroy pants
As she smiles with a pearly grin
And taps me on the shoulder, pointing.
In unison, our blond heads turn
And glance about the cream-painted walls
Eighteen students, all face down,
Asleep.
We giggle like children
Only to be scolded by
A giant jar of sleeping pills
Stuffed with cotton
Pouring out information on Mathematics
Daily.
Yawning, we rest our headaches
With folded hands on ink-written desks
And drift away.

Christine Caruso

Lori Yanke

In Response to--Nietzsche's Aphorisms "Beyond Good and Evil" #1

"I don't like him."-Why?-"I am not equal to him."-Has any human being ever answered that way? (#185)

This aphorism reminds me of the childish, petty people that we all are deep down inside. Who wants to admit inferiority to another? Would one not be doing just that when he makes an acquaintance with someone of higher intelligence, or perhaps greater physical strength? A defense mechanism that people use to stay within their own levels is finding ridiculous faults in others to justify why this person of superior nature is bad or wrong in some way. Really, most of the time when we criticize others it is usually due to the fact that we see weakness inside ourselves. We see the same weakness we criticize, seemingly as a means to "cure" the other person of his fault, so we can vicariously be cured.

This aphorism is also valid when tables are turned, when one feels that he is superior to another. Why would a person want to waste his time dealing with another in any way other than one that is most certainly patronizing? A person who feels higher and mightier would justify snubbing a lesser being, ironically, by the same means that he uses when he himself is feeling inferior: by pointing out faults. It is funny to consider how we judge others without even realizing it, then justify our ratings by pointing out other's faults. I can see this behavior in myself, but I doubt that it exists in me as much as I have seen it demonstrated through the actions of others. But, looking back, isn't that what we'd all like to think? Even after reading this aphorism, a part of me says, "Well, I recognize this type of thinking in others, certainly, but of course I am beyond this because Nietzsche and I are on the same page. I would never resort to that type of rationality. Only idiots would." Contradiction in terms? Yes, highly likely.

Lori Kann

Throughout time there has always been one constant. That constant is love. Nietzsche sees love as an emotion that is not dictated by morals. Love is something that transcends human existence. It also makes people do crazy things, things they would never do in their right minds. Right or wrong love is something we all strive for fervently.

Nietzsche agrees that love makes people do things that do not adhere to any moral principle. People who are in love (or at least think they are) seem to lose hold of their moral principles. In their minds, the things they do are right because they do them for love. Love becomes the ultimate cause.

History is filled with stories of people making fools of themselves for the love of another. Everyone has friends or family members who have been made fools for someone whose heart they were trying to win. Romantic love is definitely not the only love Nietzsche is talking about, however.

I think he is referring to a stronger love. He refers the love that comes from friendship and family. This love can be achieved through romantic love but does not require it. Love of this caliber holds a much deeper value than romance. It is the love of parent and child, of sister and brother, of friend and friend.

This love, Nietzsche believes, surpasses all the morals and rules that we set up in our society. It goes to the core of our beings and touches us. Nietzsche sees this love making us do more than just crazy things, but also unselfish and senseless things. Long thought and contemplation are not synonyms with this love. Many things we do for love make no sense at the time and often are harmful to our well-being.

A parent stealing medicine for this sick child, a brother beating up the boy who hurt his sister, a person lying to cover for his friend, these are all examples of actions that, despite their good or evil, are what Nietzsche believes is true love. Love becomes the higher rule and, therefore, goes beyond good and evil.

Pat Moran

"Gay Science" #261

Humans with any creative bent are constantly driven to forge original work. Originality is something undiscovered or discovered and unrecognized by others. Originality can be innovation as much as it can be invention. Nietzsche raises some interesting insights about originality in his aphorism #261 in the "Gay Science."

Nietzsche defines originality: "What is originality? To see something that has no name as yet and hence cannot be mentioned although it stares us all in the face." Something alien, foreign, unique is nameless and unrecognizable to us at first. Often, something mysterious is fearsome because it is unknown; we do not know what to expect from it. Nietzsche believes that when we try to understand the unknown, we make it common, safe, and familiar by assigning it a name. Naming the unknown can render it visible and knowable. I think that experiencing the unknown, probing it, and understanding it in relation to oneself (and others), promotes spiritual change and creates new forms of beauty and horror. To know a skill, an idea, an object, a belief does not necessarily destroy its novelty. Once one facet of something original is known, its value and impact may resound for generations. Further, other facets will open for exploration.

Bringing the unknown into focus changes us, sometimes drastically, sometimes subtly. At the very least we alter our awareness to include the existence (or the possibility of existence) of something original.

Desmond Johnson

Chapstick Jam

I think that it was during a beef jerky kiss
at a stop in a crossroads
that you told me
that you didn't like the taste of my chapstick.
Car claustrophobia had set in
and you were thinking crookedly.
Your patience is wearing thin in this traffic—
I touch your face and say,
"Don't worry baby, we'll be to the tunnel soon."
Making love to my reflection in the rearview,
I pucker on some Primrose Plum lipstick and kiss your nose
leaving fossilized lip prints.
I laugh to think that the taste of my chapstick really mattered.

Bridget Velten

every day

I wasn't sleepy when you left
I faked it, I lied.
you'll forgive me
you'll be glad I let you go,
buried my head in bear and my pillow,
nestled down into our blanket until
I heard the door close
and up up I am now
you had to go I know
he only comes but once in a while
I'm for every day

Olivia Bitting

Sara Deluca

Midnight Place

Piece by piece,
everyday,
I wash away a piece of you.

Into dark lonely caverns,
where shadows may divide,
out of the darkness of my heart,
into the limelight of my mind

I have cupped my hands softly over your eyes,
and gently put you to sleep,
where the long grasses grow,
where the midnight willows weep.

Your once beating heart lies under the stars
and over a firefly sky,
while the sun sets glowing against you,
the moon fades you away, while I wonder why.

The sunset is so lovely this time of year
why the winds sweetly whisper a name
why my eyes see the distance the years can produce,
a ghost of a person seems never the same.

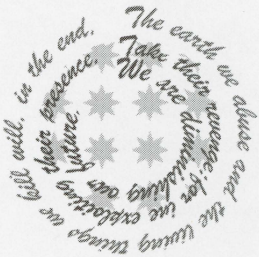
In a drawer, in a spot, in a place sad and still,
I'll dream of you now and then,
I'll grow up, I'll grow old, I'll grow out of that place,
looking back at the pieces being torn by the wind.

Elise Major

Time

The great enemy to life and a great friend to all,
Time affects everything, from its rise to its fall.
From the production of mountains 'til their ending of dust,
From the fears of betrayal, until there is trust.
Since the birth of the Son before even a year,
Since man's first step, his first words, his first fear.
Through to the present in my life and in yours,
Traveling oceans and arriving on shores.
It changes everything, leaving nothing like new,
Even through love, no matter how strong nor how true.
Can we not stop what is known by the chime?
Is there no Savior? Just destruction of time.

W. Greg Pearre



Kelly Grammes

Nature

The rock sits alone;
A quiet time to ponder
The beauty of the earth.

Tanya Castagna

Warm Breezes

Warm breezes blow across
naked skin, awaking the senses.
Springtime is knocking.

Drew Lermond

A snowy evening...

Wonder did I then, sadly,
why the touch of your fingers
across these giant hands felt

so cold,
so cold

like those white crystals
I saw flutter outside a dirty
window

down from a bruised sky
circling
        quietly,

down far below
to their silent death
among the

tall
unkept
blades
of grass

Eric Brown

Spring Break

I saw you in a car with Illinois plates
You and four friends on spring break.

Your dim, dull eyes turned in my direction,
You did not see me, only your reflection,

Two dimensional and shallow,
like your hollow, cookie-cutter life.

Charles Stephenson

Jamie Collins

Broke

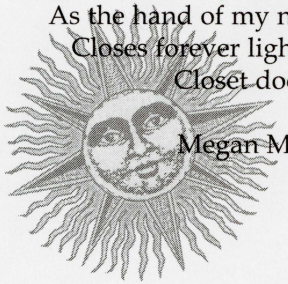
we see beggars and we follow
rules that say be silent and blind
and deaf; I know the lessons well.
I tried to follow all the rules
when she came quiet begging
but I stopped to listen,
gave her all my change
and now have none.

Olivia Bitting

from "There's a Nightmare in My Closet" by Mercer Mayer

Night...my nightmare.
Dark room and him
Rushing toward me.
I begin to cry
I scream.
I stop crying.
I get mad sitting tucked in bed
As the hand of my nightmare
Closes forever light and the
Closet door on me.

Megan Murphy



Sadism

I'm sick of the furtive glances
the accidental bumps in the hallways
the coy smiles
the innuendo when we chat
the lust notes when we can't
the tight jeans taut on your tight ass when you tease me
from across the room

You were supposed to meet me
in that secluded spot
about which we always joked
You never came
I never came

You taunt me from across the room again
Another wiggle,
Another wink,
You screw with my head
I screw with my head

I hope you're just a little tortured
I'll punish you for this

Ilya Goldin

Fear

We wait in an endless line for hours
Bits of others' whispering conversations
Blending with the sound of my stomach growling.
As we stand impatiently, with tapping feet,
You turn swiftly around
Like a graceful skater in performance
And your blue eyes grow wide,
As if you envisioned death.
Shaking rapidly, you reach out for my thin arm,
Then you fall, like one giant marble to the floor…
Rolling around.

Paralyzed with fear, I cry out for help,
In disbelief of what I am seeing.
No words come from your lips,
Only saliva, running down your chin.
Afraid and alone,
I watch the open mouthed customers
Stare.

"Someone please call 911…he's having an attack!"
I clutch you in my arms,
Runny nose and weeping eyes,
And kiss your angelic forehead.
Red lights flashing turn
To the white florescence of a hospital room.
I see your smiling face,
Lying under cool blanketed sheets and
I sigh.

Christine Caruso

Laura Chatterton

the good life: visioteric

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onblanket
nexttolover.

T h e y se sont embrassés
a d
n e
d l a u g h

Ilya Goldin

Inspired by William Carlos Williams

This is just to say

I have eaten
the plums
that were in
the icebox
and which
you were probably
saving
for breakfast

Forgive me
they were delicious
so sweet
and so cold

WCW

Hospice

I did not
volunteer
to help you
today

You were
lying there
fading and
calling for me

Please understand
that my day
was full
of life

Tanya Castagna

Curiosity

This is Just To Say...

I was snooping
around reading
old letters
last night

Love notes
from Dad
private, personal
and erotic

I'm sorry
I often wondered
if there was lust
now I know

Tanya Castagna

Words

We have debated
this matter
one day
too long

As we sit
too exhausted
to reach
an outcome

Forgive me
it's difficult
being
RIGHT

Tracy Smith

2 Past Midnight

It is the kind of night that gives you the chills up and down your spine.

It's not the cold or the sudden gushes of wind that come out of nowhere and feel like some creature's icy breath, that's draining the life out of you.
It's not the crunching and crackling sounds emitted by the leaves that a monster is stepping on, while approaching you, ready to satisfy its thirst for blood.
It's not the shadow of a figure up ahead that you can't quite make out to be anything but waiting death.
And it certainly isn't just your imagination that keeps calling your name in a raspy voice, as you run through the park at 2 past midnight, when all the beasts want to feed on flesh.

No, I think you know exactly what it is that's going to kill you at 2 past midnight.
There is no escape.

It's not going to fly in at you from over the water and carry you back to its nest, as food for its young.
It's not going to reach up from the depths beneath the damp ground your feet are rhythmically pounding on and pull you down, down into its prison below.
It's not going to hide in a shadow and take only just one bite of you as you run by.
And it certainly isn't going to leave you just lying wounded on the ground, holding yourself together, while you try to get the blood from your eyes, in hopes of staying alive in the park at 2 past midnight.

It's the kind of night that gives you chills up and down your spine and makes you want to ask your mommy if you will survive to reach 3 past midnight.
But you and I both know what it is that's going to get you in the end.
And your mommy can't help you now.

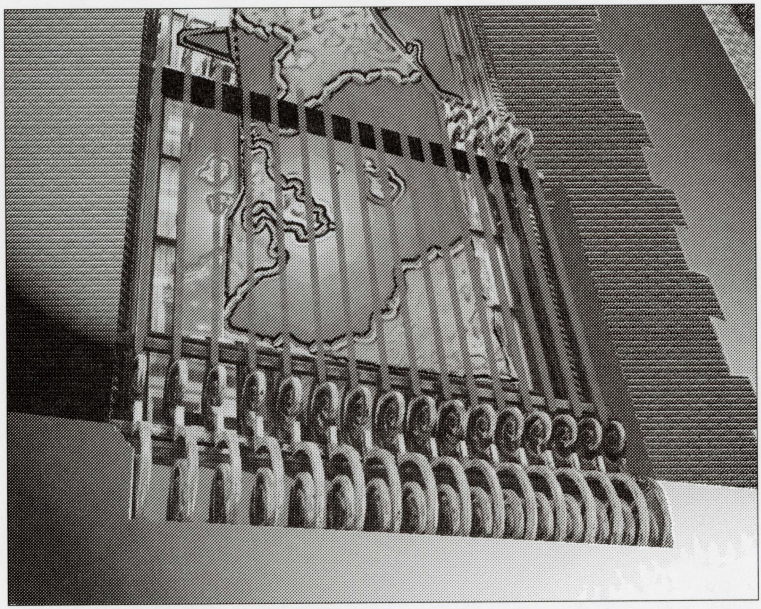
It's not any of these scary things; it's much, much worse.

It is the cheesecake you ate with shots of Citron before you went to bed, that you thought was going to help you sleep.

But now it's too late, you can't take it back.
You're doomed to run amongst the monsters at 2 past midnight, through a cold and scary park, absolutely bare-ass naked to the world, while all of your friends and even your kindergarten teacher run after you, laughing themselves silly.

With a sudden jolt you wake up in a cold sweat.
You hear yourself say aloud, "I will never eat cheesecake again."
And from all around you, your for-the-moment-still-attached ears hear with growls and snarls, "It's not the cheesecake we want!"

Jeff Wagaman



Annie Scholtes

Charles Stephenson

The Thing in the Lighthouse

September 16, 1998

We've finally arrived! After driving for three arduous hours across Maryland and the Bay Bridge to the Eastern Shore, we've reached old Blochshire. We all decided to take a week off from our jobs and check the old place out. The locals say it's haunted. We thought it would be fun.

The Blochshire Lighthouse sits on an island right in the middle of the Chesapeake Bay. The ghosts may have come because the lighthouse was built next to a Civil War Union POW camp. Riots swept through the camp early on followed by hideous diseases. Since the Civil War ended, several families have moved in and out saying that they loved it. They've also reported a little poltergeist activity that piqued my interest. The previous owners all moved to Gettysburg a few months ago.

Day One of the Haunting

Last night Chad, Christine, and I had a party in town as kind of a bon voyage. I'm longing for the mainland already. The only contact that we have is Chad's cell phone.

Christine wants to explore every inch of this old place. There's one locked door in the lighthouse that tugs at my mind constantly. It may lead to the lighthouse tower. The last family had to lock it up so none of the kids would climb up, but I wondered why they'd neglect their duties as lighthouse keepers by locking up the beacon. Chad reminded me that this port hasn't had any shipping since WWI. This area's restricted from recreational boating.

Day Two

It won't be daytime for a few hours. I just woke up from a nightmare. I blame the lighthouse for it. When I went downstairs, I found Chad and Christine in the kitchen nursing a pot of coffee. They had nightmares too. I slumped down at the table and nearly fell back to sleep when Christine pointed at my face, "What's that on your lip?"

I wiped my nose and lurched back seeing the weird black grease on my fingers. The slime dripped off my fingers, fell onto the table, and vanished like the table absorbed it.

Day Three

Christine lost her Bible. She started setting her room up this morning, left, and when she returned, the Bible was gone. We scrounged around in Chad's and my room looking for it. Nothing. Christine said that she can't stand losing her Bible.

A battle almost erupted at breakfast. Everyone else says that we've got evidence of a poltergeist but I'm not so sure. I stood next to an open cupboard. Chad sat at the table with his back to me. A teacup flung itself out of the cupboard and knocked Chad on the back of his head. He leapt up and exploded in my face for throwing the cup. I told him that the cup "threw itself." At first he didn't buy it, but then he remembered that we were in a haunted lighthouse. The teacup sat by the cupboard wall. It looked like the wall *sucked the cup in and spat it out.* I remembered the black grease dissolving into the table.

Chad wrote this down as the first sighting of a poltergeist and went to find his cell phone. The phone turned up missing too. He had left it on the table last night.

3:30 A.M.

I'm staying up tonight. I'm sick of nightmares. The more horrifying the nightmare, the harder it feels to wake up. I went to the bathroom mirror when I awoke. I *did* feel something wet around my eyes trickle away. Chad and Christine mumbled and groaned from their rooms. I went to check on Chad who was tossing violently in his sleep and fighting to open his eyes. I turned on the light but he didn't wake up. Then I saw the black grease. The slime converged around Chad's eyes, nostrils, and ears like it was crawling into his skull. It wanted him to have nightmares. It wanted all of us to have nightmares. I felt something drip onto my head. I looked up at the ceiling. A spot of the grease formed over my head and sucked Itself back into the woodwork. I went back to shaking Chad much, much harder to the point where I could have cracked his neck and enjoyed it. He woke up and tossed me off with mammoth strength. Chad swore at me with fiery rage. I tried to tell him about the black grease on his face. He tossed me out of the room.

Day Four

Chad avoided me today. Christine found, of all things, an old metal key in her dresser. When she looked for her Bible

there, she said she never saw a key of any kind. It's like the thing appeared just for her. She used it instantly on that locked door to the main tower. Lately she's been walking around like she's stuck in a waking dream. Maybe she needs the fresh air. We're all growing sick of Blochshire.

I have a theory about the grease. Maybe it caused those nightmares and those vicious thoughts. But why would it cause all those depraved feelings? Chad's bugging me to do the laundry. I think that he should do it instead of looking for that damned cell phone. He can just kiss my...

As I was just writing that last paragraph the grease formed instantly on the paper. I looked up to see if it dripped off the ceiling but, no, It just formed. It seeped Itself onto the paper for a moment and crawled towards my hand as I was writing these negative words. I jerked my hand away and the grease disappeared. It wanted to touch me because I had evil thoughts. What if It needs evil thoughts? What if they attract the grease? (But from where?) Why would people live here for a century and say the place was quaint and comforting? I have to go. Chad is getting more irritated about the laundry.

I'm onto something here. The washer and dryer are both in the basement. Out of the corner of my eye, I spotted something hidden in an unfinished corner of the wall. It was Christine's Bible. What was it doing down there? Why would she put it in a rotted out corner of the foundation? I pulled the Bible out of the hole. Before my eyes black tendrils whipped out of the hole, snatched the Bible, and slurped it deeper into the stonework. The door out of the basement closed before I took my next breath. Then I knew I wasn't alone. I felt something standing in the dark corner. I thought how stupid I was for not running or beating up the mysterious intruder. I grabbed the metal lamp shade and aimed the light at the figure.

There stood a featureless human figure. Just a trunk with blobs for appendages. It melted back into the grease. My self-loathing kept growing. I felt part of the black grease. Its presence caused my negative emotions. For a few more seconds it congealed into the slouched skeletal frame with a small, pointed "head" and ropy arms, legs and tail. Strands of it branched off into random points on the walls, ceiling and floor. Then It pumped Itself directly into the walls, not into cracks or open

gaps. Then the room spoke with a discordant, foggy voice.

"*You've gotten closer than all other prey combined. Excellent work, Brian. But I know your weak spots.*"

"Christine?" I bolted up the staircase and got a swift bludgeon to the head. Before I passed out, more of the grease condensed on the staircase behind me.

This is now my confession. I awoke tied to a chair in the kitchen. Chad stood before me with a devilish grin and a meat cleaver in his hand. He had tied me up with the table cloth. Why?

"Chad! There's this thing in the basement! It lives off our evil thoughts and...!"

"*You're not talking to Chad anymore.*" It spoke in Chad's voice, but not with Chad's mind. The black grease bubbled from inside his face around his eyes, nostrils, and ears,

"*I've taken all that I can out of Chad. His brain is dead, but his body is still useful.*"

"That's why all of those people left saying that this was a great place. You destroyed their minds and used their bodies as drones."

"*Yes, I need drones to entice more prey to come here.*"

As the Chad drone spoke, I wiggled my hands. The knot was weak and I easily stretched it apart. Chad's body raised the butcher knife and slashed it down at my face. I fell off the chair onto the floor, bounded up, grabbed the bronze candelabra, and swung it at Chad's face. He fell at my feet. The black grease oozed out of his head and leaked into the floor. Chad looked at me for a second, then his whisper-thin breathing ceased. I had killed Chad for real.

"Christine?" I dropped the candlestick besides Chad's corpse and dashed up to the lighthouse tower. At the top Christine stood before a gap in the bronze railing. She turned to me with a sadistic grin. The black grease frothed up from around her eyes, ears, and nostrils,

"Hey Brian, think I could fly?"

I lunged to stop her. She released the railing and plummeted down the side of the lighthouse without the slightest sound. I grabbed the railing to save myself. Her body washed off the rocks and floated away into the ocean.

The railing started closing around me as I crawled back.

The bronze grew like metal tentacles until it clutched its other end and solidified. The Thing must have grown here until It became the lighthouse and used it as an extension of its own body.

"*I knew you were an interesting prey,*" out of the wall It manifested a moving image of Chad's face. I swung my arm at It and broke my wrist when the face vanished into the bricks. I had to escape, but would It let me?

This journal is my only escape. I tried to break through the doors or windows, but the Thing melted them away. When I'm done writing this, I will seal it in a wooden box then toss it out the window. I don't know where it will land. If anyone finds it, please believe me. Burn the Blochshire lighthouse down. All I can do now is wait for the inevitable.

October 15, 1998, Psychiatrist's report.

Two weeks ago police found the body of Christine X floating in the Blochshire Harbor and the body of Chad Y in the lighthouse. The murder weapon that broke his frontal skull was a bronze candlestick with Brian Z's fingerprints on it. The railing around the area where Christine X evidently jumped also had his fingerprints. The police found Brian Z in a catatonic state inside the lighthouse. He is in no condition to go on trial. He's under my care at Miskatonic Asylum. He spends most of his time curled up in the center of his room muttering something about "black grease" and his lost journal. I don't know what could have happened in Blochshire. It's such a lovely lighthouse.

Erik Kiessling

Magnificent Desolation...

I wondered then what it was
I remembered most about my mother—
as the trees shook their leafy heads

at the stone clouds gathering across a
vanishing blue and what beauty there was
of the sky lay covered now in bruises—

and, as I thought of her, these hands trembled
there atop that lonely spot on my chest
where this heart cries alone--

Cold tears gathered now upon
dark lashes as the rain does
along the edges of a grey overcast

waiting to break free once I surrender
to the sadness and draw their salty lines
around lips frozen open—a few spilling
down
into
a
mouth
still fumbling
for the right words to say...
for anything to say at all...

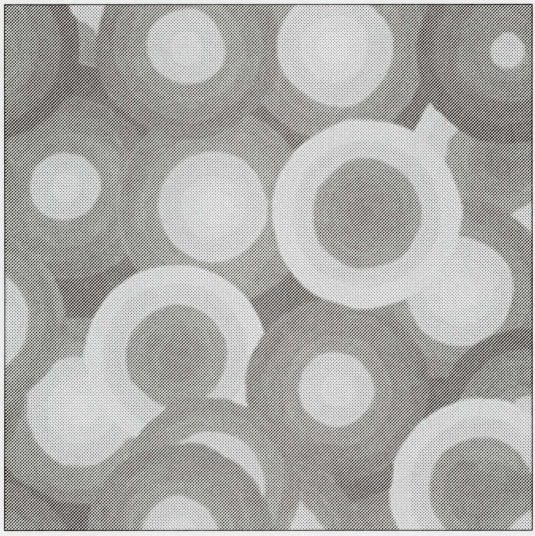
But nothing came to me then.
Words could describe nothing about her.

Looking around me I see the hung
faces of those I love,
their tear-stained eyes surrounding me now
with looks of understanding

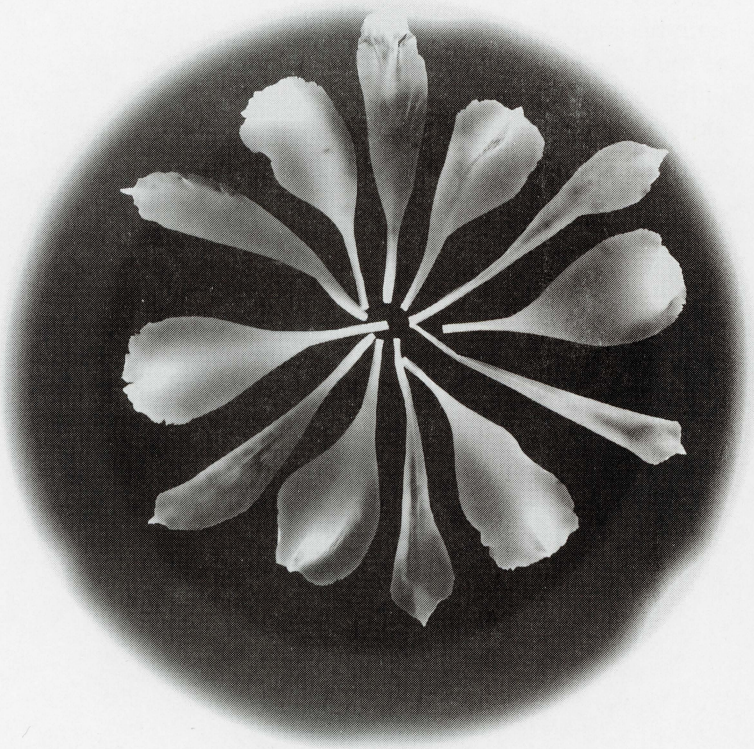
as the rain began to saunter down
through the whispering branches.

These eyes close
and I see the face of only one now
Looking back at me
with her kind blue eyes
as the long auburn strands
of her hair danced in playful wind
and a warm smile
gathered next
to a lone hand
waving,
good-bye to me
waving,
good-bye my son

Eric Brown



Bryan Gunning



Pat Pitthayasri

Utopia

THERE SHOULD BE A PILL
To turn off the mind
A torturous maze
of thoughts.
Showing you your mistakes
But never guarding
The fragile heart.

THERE SHOULD BE A PILL
To erase memories—
just certain ones—
that slip in on you.
The ones that you try to forget
The ones that make it hard
To start over.

THERE SHOULD BE A PILL
To escape pain forever
To miss out on the misery
To let you say, "Oh well."
To end the hurting
To let you smile again
let you feel the sun
let you go forward in time.

THERE SHOULD BE A PILL

Amy Hall

A toe ring

A toe ring
Dull
Compared to your eyes

As you look on
Sand disperses
Between lines
Drawn by playful fingers
Silver sealed

She rushes water
Searching for purification
"Wash away my guilt!"
She screams into the sea...

Undulating moods go on for days
Nervous disorder
Anxiety martyr
Paranoia

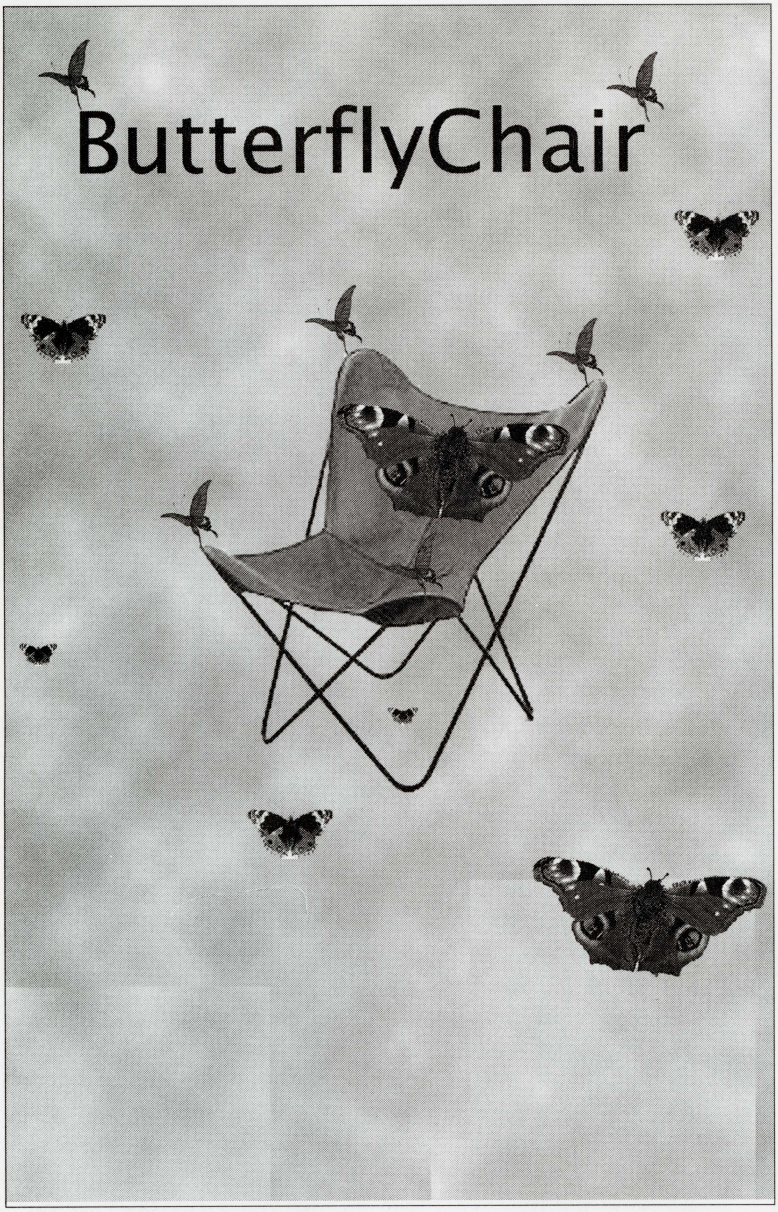
Beside the bay
Beneath a dense sky
Perched upon a board
Like the sea gulls
She soars

Beyond reality
Surpassing clock time
On her own
Out of her mind.

Sand child, poetry god,
Innocent pride

Had you known then John
That you'd board her ride?

Marie Schwartz



Lidia Ferriara

170: The Number of Beasts

Plagues have infected civilization as long as civilization has existed. When Moses appeared in Egypt, Ramses was faced with various plagues. His country was infested with frogs, bugs and other assorted annoyances. Later, rats stormed Europe carrying the Bubonic plague. In America today, we face far greater threats. They are approximately five inches long. They are colorful and soft. They are full of PVC pellets. They are a plague infecting Americans across the country. They are Beanie Babies.

Are they actually babies? No, they are merely stuffed animals. They are shaped in almost comical fashions, unrealistic representations of natural animals. A chameleon made of tie-dyed velvet, a multicolored worm named "Inch," a green bear with a clover tattooed oh his chest, a terrier named Tuffy; these are just a few of the expressions of this disease. There are currently over 170 different styles, each with a name and story. Some are special issue and some are just run of the mill production units.

Beanie Babies are expensive beyond their fifty cents worth of materials; some are priced as high as $2300. What makes them worth so much? Well, after a few months of being in one form, the disease transforms itself to a brand new expression, a new design. They call this retirement, and it allows the owners of a parrot or coiled snake—which costs them $6.00— to possess a collector's item.

Their value is not the danger of these items, nor is their transformation or their cute beauty. The danger lies in the spread of the disease. One Beanie does not live by itself. It takes over its victims quickly and silently, forcing them to buy more and more, until obscene amounts of money have been funneled into Ty, Inc., the manufacturer. (Actually, Ty is just a cover for the beanies and other "stuffed animals" which it produces. It serves as a disguise for the disease so that they can accumulate earthly goods and assimilate more human victims.) Now this disease is a ruthless epidemic sweeping across the land. When only one or two evidences of the condition are visible, there is still hope, but if there

are three or more, there is little hope for the victim; the victim will be overcome.

You may be asking. "How do I know if I or someone I know is infected?" The following symptoms are exhibited by those who have the sickness:

They own more Beanie Babies than CD's, movies, and video games combined.

They remember the names of every Beanie Baby in their collection *and* the one they have yet to acquire, but cannot remember when or what they last ate.

Each time they pass a store displaying expressions of the disease their faces light up more than at Christmas time.

The first words out of their mouths when they receive money are "Beanie Babies."

They are routinely late for appointments with the explanation: "I had to check the Beanie Baby Web site."

They get angry with unsuspecting friends who, foolishly, took the "Teenie Beanie Babies" McDonald's gave away out of their plastic bags to play with.

They are enraged when a Beanie Baby's tag has been removed because it posed a threat to children under six.

They stay home from morning outings to count Beanie Babies and make sure that none have disappeared since they were counted the previous night.

If you or a friend exhibits these behaviors, it is time to see a physician to seek a cure for this disease.

Although this disease may not seem harmful to society, it can be severely detrimental to a person, and if a society is full of

infected people, then the front company owns the society, the people, and the power previously reserved only for gods. We must be careful not to let this disease reach epidemic proportions. When people are dying on the streets for "Peace the Bear," then all will see the danger of the sickness. You will look back and say: "Hey, that guy wasn't crazy after all. He was right."

To anyone who hasn't seen the effects of this disease, I may seem like a lunatic. I may appear to be overreacting, but I have lost many friends to the evil that Beanies do. This disease cares not if you are young or old, rich of poor, male or female. All stand to be infected by it. We must rid our country of this Great Plague. We must find a cure for Beanie Baby Syndrome or, if no cure exists, purge the creatures from our land.

Anthony Marinaro

Dena Raitzyk

I miss

I miss those nose noises
Zerburts in the basement
Ca-ca words like e-xactly
Chinese take out on Fridays
Window dancing to Madness
Sorbet smoothies at Friendly's
Catching horseshoe crabs in the ocean
Being reeled in at Aerosmith
Bloody, blue fishermen hats
Safety pins in ska shirts
I got you babe on the love boat
Combing 70's Civil War side burns
Family feud challenges
Staying up for Mystery sci-fi
Piggyback rides in the hot sun
Over-buttered popcorn at chic flicks
Lounging poolside at the swim club
Dandelion bouquets in track
Ginger snaps cut out of shapes
Phone conversations on nothing
Us being the center of attention
I miss my best friend.

Christine Caruso

The Old Folks' Home

Frozen smiles, icy hands,
they sit and they stare.
Cold feet, blue veins,
they wish they weren't there.

Scheduled meals, little to drink,
all of their money down the drain.
No sweets, no chocolates,
all they do is complain.

You can't help but love them,
as they make life anew.
A sneaky little grin,
you know is for you.

Warm hearts, soft touches,
they're just like you and I.
Snappy comebacks, shrill voices,
they're only human, they try.

Caring gestures, open hands,
how can you not smile?
Sitting still, motionless,
they'll come 'round in a while.

Unanswered questions, called out names,
"What's the weather today?"
Warm and Sunny, hey, they're funny,
they just want to get away.

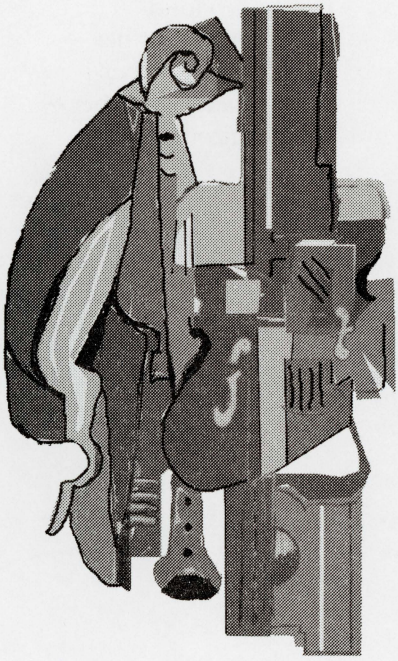
Trapped forever in these chairs
may they one day rest in peace.
Waves good-bye, soft, sad eyes,
they put my heart at ease.

I think of Mom and of my Dad,
Will they need me in time?
It's not that far, but here they are,
living happily past their prime.

Why do these folks, when awake,
think only of the past?
I pray for solace and for comfort,
one day will be their last.

Jaime Long

E C H O



Lidia Ferrara

Mosaic

I know that if I were a guy
I would want her.
She appeals to me.
Stoned, glassy eyes wander,
her "e" kicks in
and she swirls around
and around
on a barstool in the
middle
of the room.
A soggy Marlboro hangs in existence from her bottom lip
and her dirty, greased hair doesn't even
falter as she spins and spins.
She is singing about not wanting to come down off her
cloud-
I don't want her—
I don't like her—
I just want to be her—
Conceited Bitch.

Bridget Velten

Pat Pitthayasri

It's Easy to Pretend

She smiles at me sheepishly through the small square window on the door. She knows that soon it will be bad news, when the doctor comes, but all she can do is sit there. The nurse lets me walk in, but only with my disguise--a facemask, a robe, and a smile.

"It might be TB," the lady says.

I think quietly to myself that if it were tuberculosis, she would be sick. She's not sick, just ill, and I know why. Our family is a walking disease that passes itself onto each generation. We've always been doomed. Of course, the cigarettes never helped either. So I smile back at her, sheepishly. She grins at me, and I laugh. She always finds her way out of the sadness that sneaks up on her when everything else is going right. The nurse closes the door behind me, and then shuts the outer door that shelters this chamber from the rest of the hospital. Someone else might get sick if it stays open.

"It feels like a prison." Mom never had much of a sense of humor that I knew of. So when she tells me she feels like she's behind bars, I have to die of laughter. That once-in-a-while funny comment keeps me longing to laugh with her. Other people don't know her, and they wonder if she ever speaks. I know her—she's my Mom, and she takes the pain out of life and reason. But when this one chance to take away her pain has left her sick, I can't help feeling guilty. I wish I knew her trick.

The TV is showing some stupid show that no one with cable ever watches. Maybe it's a show from the sixties—but I can't tell. She just complains that she doesn't have anything to do.

"Well, Mom, we can't fit a jigsaw puzzle and a table into the room, so I guess we'll have to deal with channel 2, 11, and 13." Again, we share a moment of sustained laughter. I tell her about the balloons that I brought her, and that I didn't buy them from my store. She smiles—she knows I love balloons.

"Lilies are my favorite flowers, so I thought I'd bring you one so that you could share my fascination." The carnations and the purple flower that has a name too long to remember

were just bonuses. Mom is worth a few bonuses.

I look around the room and notice that no one else has brought her gifts. I have always been the sentimental one of the family, which will be my downfall once the bad news is released. She appreciates my attempts at consolation, but I know that balloons and flowers won't take that lump away. She still smiles to let me know that it's all taken as a token of love.

I tell her about my week and how I'm cramming for finals, finishing up the last of my papers. She shakes her head and says, "Like usual." Mom knows me well. My sister and the kids are doing okay, but they miss her too. Updates on the family are tradition since I no longer live with her, and I usually have news.

"So when are you going to know the results?"

She shrugs and says, "Whenever I finish coughing enough to fill these tubes with the blood from my lungs." Some things are better left unsaid, but we're pretty blunt when it comes to the truth.

We chat for about two hours, and then she closes her eyes. I know that she's tired—they tested her all day and kept her up all night. I tell Mom that I'll be back tomorrow if she needs me and that she needs to get some sleep.

"I'm about to, whether I like it or not." I chuckle and see myself out of the door. On my way out, she calls to me, "Don't forget to wash your hands." I look back at her and feel those tears in my eyes. We both know that there is no need to wash my hands because it's not TB. But it makes a good cover-up when I'm thinking about what is really wrong. She sighs and closes her eyes, returning to her long-awaited nap. I finish my exit, take off the thin, plastic robe and discarding it in the trash can labeled "medical waste."

"This has been one hell of a day," I think to myself. Dad is supposed to be coming back with a Walkman for her, so she can listen to her books-on-tape. At least I'm not leaving her all alone with the masks, robes, and fake smiles of people who aren't family. Dad will be here soon, and I know that she can't wait, although they never act too happy around each other. So much for thoughts that don't get me anywhere.

On the way out of the last door, I turn to the sink and wash my hands clean of the truth. For now we'll pretend it's not cancer.

Jaime Long

Till I kiss you next

it was so hard to leave this morning
your warm body calling, calling
my lips falling to your lips
I couldn't help it
I smelled the morning outside
through the window cracked
and through the blinds
I dressed in darkness to save your eyes
and said I love you, calling, calling
melted heart when you returned in kind
my body leaning to you
hand on your face, eyes fixed on you
you were trying to let me go
I couldn't go, I couldn't help it
it was so hard to leave this morning
you in my bed, soft mouth silent
too long till I see you next
aching as I stand to go
lean once more and hold my breath
to hold the moment
till I kiss you next

Olivia Bitting

VILLA JULIE

COLLEGE